

House Passes HomeStar Bill to Create Jobs, Save Families on Energy Costs

After losing three-quarters of a million jobs per month, on average, during the last three months of the last administration, our economy is creating jobs again. It was announced this week that the economy added 290,000 jobs in April – 231,000 in the private sector - which is good news for our recovery from recession and shows that employers and workers are starting to have some confidence in the economy. The number of jobs added last month was the highest in four years, and comes on recent news that the American economy has grown for three months straight.

News like this demonstrates that our recover policies are making real progress, but with the middle class still hurting and millions of Americans still out of work, Congress's job-creating work continues. The Recovery Act passed last year cut taxes for 98% of working Americans and is responsible for some 2 million jobs. And in the past month, President Obama signed into law legislation giving small businesses payroll tax credits for every new employee hired, and Congress is working to pass legislation to expand job-creating state and local bond programs and make it easier to invest in small businesses.

All of those steps are contributing to our recovery and helping to put Americans back to work—but as long as so many Americans remain unemployed, our work in Congress is still not done. That's why the next step in our effort was to pass the HomeStar Energy Retrofit Act – a bill that is projected to create 168,000 new construction and manufacturing jobs across America through investments in energy efficiency.

This bill creates immediate incentives for homeowners to make their homes more efficient, which has a triple benefit: saving Americans on their energy bills, making our nation more energy efficient, and putting Americans to work in construction jobs that cannot be outsourced. In fact, 90% of the products needed for HomeStar energy retrofitting are made in the United States.

Americans who want to take advantage of a more energy-efficient home will have access to \$3,000 rebates for insulation, duct sealing, windows and doors, air sealing, and more efficient water heaters. The 3 million families expected to take advantage of this bill will be able to save \$200 to \$500 on their energy bills each year—a total of \$9 billion over the next decade. And every time one of those families makes home improvements, more jobs are created—jobs to build more energy-efficient materials and jobs installing them in homes across America.

This bill makes economic sense, and it's supported by some of the leading groups in America's business community, including the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the National Association of Manufacturers, and the National Association of Home Builders. The Chamber of Commerce Calls HomeStar "a worthwhile, incentive-based program to create American jobs and promote energy conservation." And the National Association of Manufacturers says that it will "spur much-needed consumer demand for energy-efficient products and building materials...quickly creat[ing] jobs in the manufacturing, distribution, and sale of energy-efficient products."

The HomeStar bill and other jobs legislation we have passed show how seriously Congress takes the ongoing challenge of doing what we can to help the private-sector create jobs. And while the news that the economy is creating jobs and growing again paints an encouraging picture of growing economic health, we do not consider our work complete until this month's good news repeats itself many times over.